

CLAIMS

1. A method for managing multiple user identities for a user of an electronic commerce (e-commerce) site, the method comprising:

5           defining the e-commerce site as one or more security domains; and

          in response to a user's request to invoke an operation of the e-commerce site:

                  determining a one of the one or more security domains to which the operation  
                                  relates;

                  performing one of a) creating a session and b) reusing a session for the user  
10                       automatically in accordance with the determined security domain, said  
                                  session associated with a user identity and a role indicating privileges for  
                                  invoking operations of the e-commerce site in at least the determined  
                                  security domain; and

                  persisting said session for reuse.

15       2. The method of claim 1 comprising invoking said requested operation with said user identity  
          and role of said session.

          3. The method of claim 2 wherein the session comprises information indicating at least one of:  
          the user preference's for invoking operations at the e-commerce site; the user's preferences for  
          invoking operations at at least the determined security domain; and a security signature for  
20       authenticating the session information.

          4. The method of claim 1 comprising evaluating the requested operation to determine an  
          operation type and wherein said step of performing is performed in accordance with the  
          operation type.

          5. The method of claim 1 comprising receiving the user's request in association with one or  
25       more sessions persisted for the user and selecting a one of the sessions in accordance with said  
          determined security domain; and wherein said performing is performed in response to said  
          selecting.

6. The method of claim 4 wherein said user identity is associated with an identity type for permitting the invocation of operations; wherein said method comprises receiving the user's request in association with one or more sessions persisted for the user and retrieving a user identity for the determined security domain from said one or more sessions; and wherein said performing is performed in response to the identity type of the retrieved user identity.
7. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of persisting comprises providing one or more cookies defining the session to the user for associating with a subsequent request.
8. The method of claim 6 wherein the cookies comprise an authentication cookie and a session cookie; and wherein the method comprises authenticating the user's request.
9. The method of claim 1 comprising:
- defining each of the one or more security domains as a hierarchy of organizations and assets owned by the organizations; and
- wherein said determining a one of the one or more security domains to which the operation relates comprises evaluating the user's request in accordance with the hierarchy.
10. A computer program product having a computer readable medium tangibly embodying computer executable code for managing multiple user identities for a user of an electronic commerce (e-commerce) site defined using one or more security domains, the computer program product comprising code for:
- in response to a user's request to invoke an operation of the e-commerce site:
- determining a one of the one or more security domains to which the operation relates;
- performing one of a) creating a session and b) reusing a session for the user automatically in accordance with the determined security domain, said session associated with a user identity and a role indicating privileges for invoking operations of the e-commerce site in at least the determined security domain; and

persisting said session for reuse.

11. The computer program product of claim 10 comprising code for invoking said requested operation with said user identity and role of said session.

5 12. The computer program product of claim 11 wherein the session comprises information indicating at least one of: the user preference's for invoking operations at the e-commerce site; the user's preferences for invoking operations at at least the determined security domain; and a security signature for authenticating the session information.

10 13. The computer program product of claim 10 comprising code for evaluating the requested operation to determine an operation type and wherein said code for performing is adapted to be performed in accordance with the operation type.

14. The computer program product of claim 10 comprising code for receiving the user's request in association with one or more sessions persisted for the user and selecting a one of the sessions in accordance with said determined security domain; and wherein said code for performing is adapted to be performed in response to said selecting.

15 15. The computer program product of claim 13 wherein said user identity is associated with an identity type for permitting the invocation of operations; wherein said computer program product comprises code for receiving the user's request in association with one or more sessions persisted for the user and retrieving a user identity for the determined security domain from said one or more sessions; and wherein said code for performing is adapted to be performed in response to  
20 the identity type of the retrieved user identity.

16. The computer program product of claim 10 wherein said code for persisting comprises code for providing one or more cookies defining the session to the user for associating with a subsequent request.

25 17. The computer program product of claim 16 wherein the cookies comprise an authentication cookie and a session cookie; and wherein the computer program product comprises code for authenticating the user's request.

18. The computer program product of claim 10 comprising code for:

defining each of the one or more security domains as a hierarchy of organizations and assets owned by the organizations; and

5 wherein said code for determining a one of the one or more security domains to which the operation relates is adapted to evaluate the user's request in accordance with the hierarchy.

19. A system for managing multiple user identities for a user of an electronic commerce (e-commerce) site defined using one or more security domains, the system comprising:

an identity manager component configured to, in response to a user's request to invoke an operation of the e-commerce site:

10 determine a one of the one or more security domains to which the operation relates;

perform one of a) creating a session and b) reusing a session for the user automatically in accordance with the determined security domain, said session associated with a user identity and a role indicating privileges for  
15 invoking operations of the e-commerce site in at least the determined security domain; and

persist said session for reuse.

20. The system of claim 19 wherein the identity manager component is adapted to invoke said requested operation with said user identity and role of said session.

20 21. The system of claim 20 wherein the session comprises information indicating at least one of: the user preference's for invoking operations at the e-commerce site; the user's preferences for invoking operations at at least the determined security domain; and a security signature for authenticating the session information.

25 22. The system of claim 19 wherein the identity manager component is configured to evaluate the requested operation to determine an operation type and adapted to perform said one of a) creating and b) reusing in accordance with the operation type.

23. The system of claim 19 wherein the identity manager component is configured to receive the user's request in association with one or more sessions persisted for the user and select a one of the sessions in accordance with said determined security domain; and wherein the identity manager component is adapted to perform said one of a) creating and b) reusing in response to  
5 said selected one session.
24. The system of claim 22 wherein said user identity is associated with an identity type for permitting the invocation of operations; wherein said identity manager component is adapted to receive the user's request in association with one or more sessions persisted for the user and retrieve a user identity for the determined security domain from said one or more sessions; and  
10 wherein said identity manager component is adapted to perform said one of a) creating and b) reusing in response to the identity type of the retrieved user identity.
25. The system of claim 19 wherein to persist said session said identity manager component provides one or more cookies defining the session to the user for associating with a subsequent request.
- 15 26. The system of claim 26 wherein the cookies comprise an authentication cookie and a session cookie; and wherein the identity manager component authenticates the user's request.
27. The system of claim 19 wherein the e-commerce site is defines each of the one or more security domains as a hierarchy of organizations and assets owned by the organizations; and wherein said identity manager component is adapted to determine a one of the one or more  
20 security domains to which the operation relates by evaluating the user's request in accordance with the hierarchy.